

WSBIS Working Group

March 13, 2014 Meeting Notes by George

These notes were taken in part during the meeting, with additional notes captured in a short followup discussion between Barb and me shortly after the meeting. For future meetings, Barb has volunteered to take notes. Please review and comment as you see fit to keep the record straight. Post-meeting commentary is in italics below. - GFC when transcribed 3/19/14

Reviewing the WSBIS Working Group mission statement, Larry wanted it re-worked to place primary emphasis on meeting the needs of Washington State bridge owners, with secondary emphasis on fulfilling the requirements of the federally mandated bridge inspection program. This issue was tabled (*this topic is now on the 4/17/14 meeting agenda*).

Reviewing the WSBIS Working Group Goals document, Rich suggested that items 3 and 4 be switched. This was agreed to by the group, and will be implemented. George queried the group to find out if there were more goals to add to the list, but none were proposed.

George asked Margaret and Rich if the external access to BEIS was working, and they indicated it did, but of course noted that only old data for the King County bridges was available to view.

Larry asked that we spend some time discussing the details of the planned permissions structure. Steve indicated that we needed to get full documentation of the requirements currently in place and meet again with all the information at hand. (*this topic is now on the 4/17/14 meeting agenda*).

Reviewing the HLP Tasks, Hours and Timelines handout, Roman was clear that HLP wasn't in a position to define tasks, estimate hours, or estimate timelines in a comprehensive way, though a target was set to complete the "Establishing Data Standards" task by May 30. WSBIS deployment to local agencies was also delayed until October 2015 at the earliest. There was some very useful general discussion on the overall approach to the project:

- When the WSBIS rollout to local agencies does happen, it will be done agency by agency. Each local agency will be given advance notice of the scheduled migration period specific to them, close coordination with WSDOT during the migration, and WSDOT followup support if agencies find problems after the migration. As a working assumption, the group indicated it would take a week or two on average for each agency to complete this process.
- HLP will query each agency to determine the best time to schedule the migration in an effort to target periods of low data entry.
- It was agreed that for the vast majority of the inventory, all MCD's created in the HLP database since the July 2010 data split will be copied over. *This was also established as a "data standard," see below.*
- For the ~300 bridges where both HLP and BPO databases have created MCD's since the data

split, these will be addressed manually. *This also includes "duplicate" bridge records, though that wasn't specifically mentioned in the meeting.*

- Local agencies will do everything possible to release all UCD's prior to migration, which in part is why it will be scheduled during low data entry times for each agency as much as possible. If there are UCD's in the data during migration, Steve was clear that there is a significantly increased danger of data loss. *This was also established as a "data standard," see below.*
- Data migration testing will be done during the testing phase of the project. No further testing is planned during the actual migration process. Each agency will be responsible to check the data before and after switchover to assure themselves the data migrated successfully. If problems are found, HLP and BPO will work to correct issues. As a further safeguard, the HLP database will be maintained for several years in case problems are found down the road.
- Each agency will review their current bridge inventory, and make sure that their bridge records accurately reflect this inventory, and "obsolete" bridge records that need to be. *This was also established as a "data standard," see below.*
- The data migration will include all new and obsoleted bridge records created since the July 2010 data split. *This was also established as a "data standard," see below.*
- With the delay in migrating local agencies into WSBIS, the problem of getting local agency NBE data submitted to FHWA on 4/1/15 was raised, but not resolved. George pointed out that there are only a few hundred local agency bridges that meet the standard that requires NBE submittal, so it's possible a manual process could be implemented. *This will be added as an agenda item for a future meeting.*
- There was also discussion about coordinating the local agency data migration with the October 2015 and April 2016 NBI submittals. No decisions were made, but Barb proposed eliminating the October 2015 NBI submittal. *Further evaluation of options and approaches needs to be considered at a future meeting.*

There was a brief discussion about how to approach local agency testing. At the first WSBIS Working Group meeting in December 2013, George proposed that several WSDOT laptops be provided to local agencies for use in local agency environments, but subsequent discussion with IDT Field Services indicated it would be a hard sell for them. George explained the situation at this meeting, and Barb proposed creating a few "open house" days whereby test machines would be made available at WSDOT for local agency staff. This idea was expanded to include several WSDOT locations statewide. George indicated this could also be an opportunity to gather requirements directly from agency staff. Steve indicated that any testing program did need to have some test machines within selected local agency environments to test data transmission and permissions in a realistic way. No decisions were made with respect to testing, and further work will be taken up at a later unspecified date.

There was a fairly lengthy discussion about the "Establishing Data Standards" task. Reviewing the

three categories defined in the Agenda, Larry pointed out that a fourth was needed to address "associated files" - photos, spreadsheets, pdfs, etc associated with the inspection reports. No further discussion of associated files happened at this meeting (*plan to make this an agenda item for future meeting*).

With respect to establishing data standards for bridge records (control entities), it appears to be mostly resolved. The standard is that each agency will review their current bridge inventory and accurately code them as obsolete if needed prior to data migration into WSBIS. *One issue not addressed at this meeting is "duplicate" bridge records (plan to make this an agenda item for future meeting).*

With respect to establishing data standards for bridge inspections (control datas), this has been resolved. The standard is that only MCD's will be migrated unless there is some specific need to include UCD's on a case by case basis, and without a commitment that the data will migrate successfully. Furthermore all MCD's created since the data split will be included in the data migration.

Establishing data standards for business data fields, including BMS elements, was not fully resolved, but significant progress was made in finding ways to complete this work. Breaking out this discussion a little:

With respect to BMS elements, George referenced HLP's decision to match the WSDOT elements instead of the National Bridge Elements, and that all development work to date has been based on that decision. This includes development of the overall data structure, the application itself, and the BMS-NBE translator. During this meeting there was some indication that Roman was not fully comfortable with this decision, but understood that changing to NBE would further significantly delay the WSBIS project, and significantly increase the development work needed. George also pointed out that selecting NBE would involve much more data migration for local agencies, since their data currently closely matches WSDOT BMS elements. Roman asked that HLP be included whenever WSDOT BMS elements are modified, and included in the BMS-NBE translation scoping and specifications. George agreed to notify Roman when these topics were on the table at BPO.

With respect to the other business data fields, George handed out screenshots of the HLP BridgeWorks SI and IM forms. George proposed that all NBI fields be automatically migrated, and any non-NBI fields migrated only as specified by HLP. Any business data fields in the database but not visible in the forms will not be included in the data migration. This strategy was accepted by the working group, and the intent is to have all visible non-NBI fields identified for migration by HLP by the end of May. Margaret asked for screenshots of the BPO BridgeWorks so they can evaluate BPO fields for potential use. *These screenshots were provided via email on 3/10/14.*

Steve pointed out there are cases where the same business data fields have different definitions in each database, and fully identifying and resolving differences is a necessary part of finalizing a data standard. This led to a discussion of the load rating fields, a specific case in point. George indicated that every effort should be made to integrate the definitions for NBI fields like this, though if HLP considers it absolutely necessary separate definitions can be proposed to Steve K for inclusion in his development work. Steve indicated that any time the same NBI field had to be treated differently it would

complicate the development and add time to the project, though he had no specifics on how much added effort would be involved.

It became clear that the group needs a complete catalog of existing differences in data definitions for shared fields across both databases to finalize data standards. George offered to do a manual comparison and bring his findings to a subsequent working group meeting. *Shortly after the 3/13/14 working group meeting, Steve offered to create a tool that could identify differences, and this tool is currently in development.*